

REMARKS

INTRODUCTION

Claims 1-3 and 16-17 were previously pending and under consideration.

Claims 26-35 are added herein.

Therefore, claims 1-3, 16-17 and 26-35 are now pending and under consideration.

Claims 1-3 and 16-17 are rejected.

Claim 1 is amended herein.

No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry are respectfully requested.

INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the Interview of April 16, 2004. During the Interview the meaning of "chat network" was discussed, with agreement that Applicant would further explain and clarify "chat network". During the Interview chat terminology in the specification was also discussed by the Examiner, and Applicant discussed the idea of a client concentrating messages from two independent chat networks.

TERMINOLOGY IN BACKGROUND AND DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The following review of the specification is presented in view of the Examiner's remarks during the Interview.

The Background and Related Art sections of the present specification use varying terminology because the terminology in the art varies. For example, aspects of IRC-type chat relate to "channels" and "networks", and certain Japanese patent applications refer to "communication fields", "main-channels", "sub-channels", etc. The specification's Background discusses "communication fields", which are also mentioned as "common communication fields" (a basic field of chat communication), "opinion communication fields" (a field of chat

communication where the user contributes messages), "individual common communication fields" (person to person or, one on one chat communication), and so on.

A main point of the Background discussion is that the number of chat networks, common communication fields, chat channels, and so on, can become too great for a user to manage effectively (see page 3, lines 7-15). Too many windows may sometimes be displayed for different channels, fields, etc. (page 3, lines 23-27).

It is respectfully submitted that the specification's Detailed Description uses clear and consistent chat terminology. Lines 31-35 on page 7 refer to a chat system 30 (e.g. a client) as being "connected to [Internet Relay Chat] network A ... [and] similarly connected to the [Internet Relay Chat] Network B". Page 8, lines 2-5 mention that "the [Internet Relay Chat] network is defined as a logical network formed in units of services offered to users ... and is different from a physical network". A "chat network" is a generic category; an Internet Relay Chat network is an exemplary member or type of a "chat network".

This understanding of "chat network" is consistent with the Free Online Dictionary of Computing's discussion of the term "IRC": "IRC is structured as networks of Internet servers, each accepting connections from client programs" (emphasis added). It is noted, however, that a chat network can exist on a single server and the present claims do not require plural servers for a chat network.

Furthermore, at least for the detailed description, "communication field" is set forth as a "channel", which is a well-known term of art in the field of chat technology. For example, the Free Online Dictionary of Computing notes that one meaning of "channel" has been:

"<chat> (Or "chat room", "room", depending on the system in question) The basic unit of group discussion in chat systems like IRC. Once one joins a channel, everything one types is read by others on that channel.

Examples of chat networks and their channels are discussed at the top of page 9 of the specification. See also page 14, lines 27-31.

For further background information, Applicant has included with this Amendment examples of different uses of "chat network" common in the art of chat technology, including: open-site.org/Computers/Internet/Chat; www.irchelp.org/irchelp/networks; www.mirc.com/servers.html; and www.newircusers.com/network.html. Although IRC is an example of one type of chat protocol, the claims are intended to cover features related to using chat networks in general.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 USC § 102

In the Office Action, at pages 2-4, claims 1-3 and 16-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as anticipated by Redpath. This rejection is traversed and reconsideration is requested.

Claim 1, for example, recites "the chat client transmitting and receiving the messages to and/or from at least two independent chat networks that each have one or more chat servers that provide independent chat communication service to chat clients, where the chat client is in chat communication with the two chat networks concurrently over a period of time". Webster's Online Dictionary indicates that "independent" can indicate "not requiring or relying on something else".

Redpath does not have the two independent chat networks as cited above. Subgroups of a group of commonly-chatting clients are not independent chat networks. A single group of commonly-chatting clients (as in Redpath) is not two independent chat networks. And, a client of Redpath connecting first to one chat network, finishing, and then later connecting to another chat network is not in concurrent chat communication with those chat networks. Redpath also does not mention chat networks or servers that provide independent chat communication service to clients; Redpath is directed to a client feature of sending messages only when a user is done typing the complete message. This feature does not suggest or require multiple chat networks.

Although Redpath does not have two independent concurrent chat networks, it is respectfully submitted that no prior art discusses or suggests such a multi-network chat client

that also obtains messages "to or ... from a first of the ... two chat networks, and ... to or ... from a second of the ... chat networks", where the "the obtained messages [are displayed] in a first discrete display area independent of a message display area of each of the plurality of chat networks".

As an example, Figure 2 of the present specification shows an exemplary display of a chat client in communication with two chat networks concurrently. Client window 200 shows chat messages transmitted/received to/from two different chat networks; chat networks A and B. The time-interspersed messages of A and B result from the chat client being in chat communication with the two chat networks concurrently. The messages to/from chat networks A and B are displayed in a discrete display area. Even if the client's number of concurrent chat networks increases, the user is not required to deal with an increasing number of windows each dedicated to a different respective chat network (e.g. windows 300, 310, and possibly more).

The prior art does not discuss or suggest a chat client in chat communication with two independent chat networks concurrently and displaying messages to/from the same in a discrete display area.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 2 is respectfully requested.

DEPENDENT CLAIMS

The dependent claims are deemed patentable due at least to their dependence from allowable independent claims. These claims are also patentable due to their recitation of independently distinguishing features. For example, claim 2 recites "transmitting one of the messages ... to one of the chat networks in the plurality of chat networks to which said identified message is transmitted". This feature is not taught or suggested by the prior art. Withdrawal of the rejection of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

NEW CLAIMS

New claim 31 is provably generic to claim 1; the text of claim 31 may be derived by no more than removing certain words and phrases from claim 1.

Various of the new dependent claims are intended to further define chat networks. See the Background section above for support. Others recite different features of the invention.

Claim 33, which recites messages of "the two chat networks ... are interspersedly transmitted and received by the chat client over the period of time". Webster's Third New International Dictionary describes "intersperse" as being used to indicate "to scatter or set here or there among other things: insert at intervals (intersperse pictures in a book)".

CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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